

MONTANA CAMPUS CORPS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will it take me to complete my term of service?

- Part-time Members (900 and 450 hours) can anticipate working an average of 10 to 15 hours per week during the course of the normal academic year (September through May) and more or fewer hours during the summer months.
- Full-time Team Leaders (1700 hours) will complete their terms of service during the course of one academic year by working approximately 40 hours per week and possibly some hours during the summer months.
- Weekly schedules will be agreed upon by the campus-based supervisor, the member, and the placement site.
- No member may record more than a combined total (Direct Service + Member Development + Fundraising) of 65 hours per week.

Can I contribute all of my hours during the summer months?

While Campus Corps is designed to assist campus and community agencies in meeting their program goals, which normally occur during the academic year, many non-stipended members may serve intensive summer terms.

The training requires travel and time away from home and campus; why is this important?

During the term of service, there may be weekend retreats designed to offer orientation and training sessions to members and Team Leaders. The training sessions help to develop specific leadership skills to assist you in completing your service assignments, as well as to cultivate professional skills that will serve you beyond the scope of the program. The required trainings are a time for all stipended Campus Corps members to plan, solve problems, share best practices, and form a cohesive network of members across Montana. The trainings are also a place where networking and exposure to professionals in the service field occurs. We will provide assistance in getting you to and from the trainings. Training hours may be applied toward completion of your term of service.

What happens if I have to miss classes for training or another Campus Corps-related event?

Attendance at required trainings is mandatory. In the event that it is necessary for you to miss class, the Montana Campus Corps Program Manager, and/or your Campus Supervisor, may assist you in communicating with your professors about the importance of Campus Corps. The MTCC Network Office and Campus Supervisor can work with your professors to accommodate everyone's needs.

I am involved in several activities on my college campus and may not have time for every aspect of this program. Will that be a problem?

Being an AmeriCorps member is an intense experience that requires a great deal of commitment on the part of the participant. You should NOT plan to participate in the program if your other priorities will conflict with the program's requirements.

Can my direct service position be paid?

The **ONLY** positions for which non-stipended Campus Corps members may be paid while also accruing AmeriCorps service hours are service-related Federal/State-funded Work Study positions and internships – as long as the payment is a “lump sum” and is not connected to an hourly wage. All other service must be unpaid (including internships, academic course-related service, and general volunteer service). Stipended members are already receiving a modest stipend administered by their campus during their term of service, and cannot receive any other payments.

Should I make copies of my paperwork?

Please copy ALL paperwork prior to sending to the Montana Campus Compact Network Office (or to the MSU-Bozeman or MSU-Billings OCI, if you are serving from those campuses). Sometimes, things really do get “lost in the mail,” so your ability to supply a copy of your documents may be critical. Not only will you have a copy of the paperwork you have completed for recordkeeping, but you can continuously reference that information throughout your term of service. Time Logs are especially important to copy as those copies may be the only proof or record of your activities. Some campus offices may make copies of your paperwork prior to sending it to us; please check with your Supervisor.

Why do I have to write a “Great Story” and complete evaluation paperwork?

The Great Story that you write provide anecdotal documentation of the impact your service has on your community. We may use excerpts of Great Stories in our quarterly reports to the program’s funders, in grant proposals, or in marketing materials to promote *Campus Corps*. Likewise, the evaluation paperwork that you complete provides us with numerical and other data to be used in our quarterly reports and grant proposals. Without evidence that the program is meeting the objectives that were put forth in the grant proposal, the program would not continue to receive funding.

What is Member Development?

AmeriCorps regulations allow 20% of hours in your term of service to be counted toward Member Development. Member Development may be professional/personal or service-related. Professional/Personal hours are spent achieving a goal that is outside of the scope of your direct service. Service-related development hours connect to a goal you have set for your direct service on your Member Development Plan (see *Enrollment paperwork*).

What is a Criminal Background Check? What if I’ve already had one?

All members must present documentation of a successfully completed Criminal Background Check (CBC), or submit to a CBC to be initiated by the MTCC Network Office in order to be officially enrolled in Campus Corps. One of the following must occur in order for the member to be officially enrolled in the program:

- 1) If the academic department in charge of placing the member in the community (e.g. Education Field Placement Office or Nursing Clinical Supervisor) or the member’s service site initiates a CBC *no more than one year prior* to the member’s proposed enrollment date, the member must submit the completed CBC Verification Form along with enrollment paperwork.
- 2) If the department does not initiate a CBC for the member, the MTCC Network Office will initiate a CBC for the member. The member must alert the Network Office to the need to initiate a CBC in the Enrollment Packet, Section III, “Paperwork to be Completed, *Waivers & Assurances.*”

What if I can’t complete my hours by the end of my term of service? Can I get an extension?

In most instances, we are NOT able to change terms of service or automatically provide extensions. For special circumstances AmeriCorps may grant members an extension to complete their hours on a case-by-case basis. The approval is not “automatic,” and you must contact the Montana Campus Compact Network Office PRIOR to the end of your term to discuss whether you qualify for an extension. In addition, you may receive a pro-rated Education Award if you had to stop serving for “compelling personal circumstances” (e.g. a serious illness/injury to the member or a death in the member’s immediate family). However, to qualify for a pro-rated Education Award you must have completed at least 15% of your Term of Service. Please reference “Release from Term of Service” in the *Requirements for Successful Completion* section of your Member Agreement for more information.

If I do volunteer projects in addition to the hours I serve at my regular service site(s), can these hours count?

If the projects address needs in the areas of education, public safety, environmental initiatives, homeland security, or human needs, and your supervisor can verify the hours, AND the hours are appropriate either for Direct Service hours (non-Prohibited Activities) or Member Development hours, then those hours CAN be counted. In addition, some members may have more than one service site. Please remember that you *may* be required to submit a different Site Agreement form for each site at which you serve – check with your Campus Supervisor or the Program Manager.

How many AmeriCorps terms can I serve?

You can only earn two AmeriCorps Education Awards during your lifetime. An individual may serve three terms with AmeriCorps (one without an Education Award), but only two of those terms may be with Montana Campus Corps.

Why should I put my loans in forbearance?

If you have qualified loans that are currently accumulating interest, the Corporation for National & Community Service (CNCS) will pay part of the interest accrued during your term of service. Putting your loans in forbearance notifies CNCS of your current loans. If you don’t put your loans in forbearance at the beginning of your term, and they are not already in forbearance or deferment status, you will NOT be eligible to have CNCS partially pay the accrued interest at the end of your term.

Why do I have to register on the “My AmeriCorps” website at the beginning of my term of service?

Registering on this site (<https://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do>) enables you to request forbearance status (*Forbearance Request*) for any qualified loans you hold that are accumulating interest (see *above*). At the end of your term, registration on this site allows you to request payment of interest accrued on loans for which you were granted forbearance. In addition, this is the same site through which you will make online payments with your Education Award.

What is the Interest Accrual Benefit Request?

If you have qualified loans that were accruing interest during your term, you’ll complete an *Interest Accrual Benefit Request* (online at *My AmeriCorps*) at the end of your service to notify CNCS that you have finished your term. CNCS will then calculate the percentage of accrued interest to be paid, and pay your lending institution directly. To verify payment, you’ll need to contact CNCS and your lending institution directly.

How can I use my Education Award?

The Education Award can be used to repay qualified student loans, used toward the cost of attendance at a Title IV institute of higher education, and/or put toward expenses incurred while participating in school-to-work programs. For more information, refer to *Education Award Frequently Asked Questions* and/or contact the National Service Trust for assistance.

Why do I need to recruit a volunteer?

AmeriCorps has historically made the generation of community volunteers by its members a high priority in programming, and Campus Corps has a strong record of accomplishment in this area. All stipended and non-stipended members must recruit **at least one** volunteer during their term, and the volunteer must complete a Volunteer Survey, to be returned with the member’s exit paperwork (see the *Timelogs, Reporting, & Evaluation* section for this form). The volunteer(s) you recruit may be involved in a service project outside of your primary responsibilities for this program (e.g. a weekend service project or a National Day of Service).